



ALABAMA
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Corps Connection

A Monthly Publication for Alabama Citizen Corps Councils, their Partners and Affiliates

August—September 2006

Alabama Citizen Corps is a program of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

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Russell County Initiates Student Preparedness Camp

The following story was contributed by Katherine Russell:

The Russell County Citizen Corps Council, along with the Office of Homeland Security / Emergency Management, presented a Student Preparedness Camp July 10-13 at the Emergency Operations Center. The Camp presented the US Department of Homeland Security's "Ready Kids" program. Children ages 7-14 learned how to put together a disaster supply kit, received a fire safety class from Phenix City Fire Rescue Fire Fighters, participated in an Internet Safety class presented by the Russell County Sheriff's Department Sergeant Lon Russell, and learned about Amateur Radio in a class presented by Jim Herring, a CERT Communications Volunteer for Russell County. After a presentation of the 'Disaster Dudes' by Yogi Rumsey of the Office of Homeland Security / Emergency Management, the Ready Kids enjoyed practicing their tornado safety education by climbing into a Safe-T-Shelter model at the Emergency Operations Center.



The 'Ready Kids' were given a homework assignment every night which required parental participation to complete. This is a good way to bring the entire family together in planning for disaster. Parents were also provided a copy of FEMA's "ARE YOU READY" preparedness guide. A Disaster Preparedness Poster contest was conducted and the two winners, Raymond Rozell, Jr. and Chelsea Waller

took home a NOAA Weather Radio. Participants also learned about other Citizen Corps programs and were encouraged to participate with their parents until they are 18 and can join themselves!

The 'Ready Kids' also made their own disaster supply kit in class. Kits contained a flashlight, portable radio, first aid kit, crayons and coloring book, and a small lunch kit. The kids were encouraged to customize the kit based on their own needs.

Way to go Russell County Citizen Corps and the Office of Homeland Security / Emergency Management! We look forward to hearing about future Ready Kids classes!



Picking Up the Pieces: Re-establishing an Older Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch is perhaps one of the more well known initiatives of The Citizen Corps Program. With its emphasis on neighborhood communication and interaction, the program helps to reduce crime rates and increase property values. This is exactly what the Neighborhood Watch of the South Hull District in Montgomery County is hoping to do.

With a new president, Mr. Bill Foster, elected last fall, the South Hull District is working on re-establishing the once deficient program. "Before I was president, the Neighborhood Watch didn't really exist and the area suffered greatly because of it. We are now working hard with the Montgomery Police Department to raise money and awareness in order to reduce the crime rates and increase the property value of our neighborhood."

Many young organizations are inspired by the huge success stories of well-established, older organizations to start their own efforts. But those same organizations sometimes become overwhelmed and discouraged because they do not have immediate success. The South Hull District is a good example of what it is like to start out from ground zero and work your way up. To those organizations, Mr. Foster offers up this advice:

"You can't give up. You have to be consistent in your efforts because it does take a long time as everyone in the community operates on a different schedule making it difficult to get everyone in the same room at the same time. But it is worth the hard work and effort."

Mr. Foster went on to explain that while they have yet to raise enough money for all the signs they need (one on every corner of the district) they are determined to make it work. The program experienced some success with their Spring Fling that involved a yard sale, games for kids and BBQ for sale. For their upcoming meeting on August 1st, they are planning a big BBQ for the neighborhood and hope that everyone comes for the good food and chance to meet their fellow neighbors. We thank them for their hard work and hope that they reach their goal soon!



Coming Together: Signing a Statement of Affiliation

On March 23, 2006, the Alabama Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ALVOAD) hosted the first annual Spring Conference, entitled “Empowering Local Alliances Active in Disaster.”



Ande Miller, Executive Director, NVOAD, and Mel Brackman, President of ALVOAD.

Partnering with the Alabama Emergency Management Agency and the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the conference included speakers from local, state, and national organizations and government working in disaster response. Ande Miller, Executive Director of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), opened the day with an engaging presentation on the importance of local relationships and local response. She was followed by presentations from the National Weather Service and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency. The second half of the day brought attendees together in break-out

sessions covering such topics as database introductions, VOAD resources, and panelists from government, emergency management, and local agencies. The Conference concluded with

the signing of the *Statement of Affiliation* between ALVOAD and the Alabama Citizen Corps Council, a milestone for organizations and agencies working in disaster response across the state. As defined by the Social Issues Research Center, this *Statement of Affiliation* asserts the partnership between more than 30 organizations working under ALVOAD and the State Citizen Corps Council which represents the interests of over 30 local Citizen Corps councils. Ultimately, the conference was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who was involved! We look forward to seeing you again as we continue to work forward in preparing and responding to the needs of Alabama.



Sydney Hoffman, Executive Director of the GFBCI, Mel Brackman, President of ALVOAD, and Jim Walker, Director of Alabama’s Department of Homeland Security.

Preparing the Disabled Population

Before a major disaster hits, natural or man-made, the general population is told to prepare by making plans, and emergency kits for their families. But what if you are disabled? There are many other things that you have to take into consideration if you are unable to hear the storm warning over the radio or if you are unable to get out of your house quickly without the help of others.

These questions and concerns are all addressed on The Department of Homeland Security's Disability Preparedness website, <http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov/>.

The website is divided into 3 main sections, Personal Preparedness Planning, Emergency Managers, Responders Service and Care Providers, and Get Involved in Your Community. Each section thoroughly ex-



Helena Explorers Update

Flagstaff, Arizona recently hosted Explorer teams from all over the country at the 2006 National Law Enforcement Explorer Competition. Teams competed at Northern Arizona University for recognition in various categories of law enforcement. The national event serves to bring different posts together, facilitating discussion and encouragement across states with active Explorers units. Alabama was represented by the national reigning champions, the Helena City Explorers Team and eagerly awaits their glorious return! Be on the lookout for pictures and stories in the next *Corps Connection*.

SAVE THE DATE

2006 Annual

Alabama
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Conference

“Strengthening Alabama’s Communities”

**December 13-14 2006
Grand Hotel Marriot Resort
Point Clear, AL**

**For more information please go to our website at:
www.servealabama.gov**

The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives proudly announces the new and improved Citizen Corps Website. Please take the time to navigate all that this new site has to offer at <http://www.servealabama.gov/AlabamaCitizenCorps.htm>. You will find national and local information as well as links to associated state departments. And visitors will find a link to sign up to receive the *Corps Connection*. Please help spread the word - the more we stay connected, the more effective Alabama's citizen preparedness initiative will be!



VISTA Disaster Response and Recovery Team

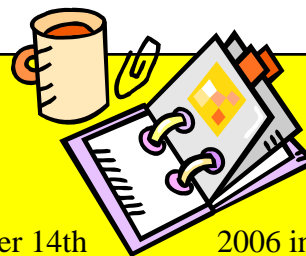
The Alabama Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GFBCI) currently has seven AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members serving alongside regular staff in the office. Led by GFBCI Emergency Preparedness and Response Coordinator, Alison Welty, the first five members began in early November. Jamey Lowdermilk joined the team in early February followed by Ruth Smith in early April. The team is working on a variety of projects, including but not limited to, setting up an Interfaith Disaster Network, writing and implementing a ten-year plan to end homelessness, and coordinating volunteers and donations for the state of Alabama. Each month we will introduce a member of the Alabama Disaster Response and Recovery Team. August's team member of the month is Jamey Lowdermilk.

VISTA of the Month—Jamey Lowdermilk

Born in Siler City and raised in Winston-Salem, NC, I completed my Bachelors at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN in May of 2004. I spent a large part of the last year and half out of the south, traveling, studying, volunteering, and working both nationally and internationally. Once Katrina hit, I redirected my pursuit of other service opportunities into this Ameri-corps*VISTA position, motivated to contribute the skills and experience I have gained elsewhere to the needs facing the gulf coast and surrounding communities. Thus, Montgomery is my new home as I eagerly join the Disaster Relief and Response Team here at the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Cheers.



Upcoming Events



Be Ready Day

Join your fellow counties for National Be Ready Day on September 14th 2006 in Huntsville, Alabama. Keep an eye out for details and events list to follow in the coming month!

The 23rd National Night Out—August 1st, 2006

A unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW) that involves law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, citizens, neighborhood organizations and local officials from all the Nation. This event is designed to heighten awareness about crime and drug prevention, strengthen neighborhoods and to send a message to criminals that the neighborhoods are united and fighting back! For more information and to register, please go to <http://natw.org/nno/about.html>.

8th National Conference on Preventing Crime

The 8th National Conference on Preventing Crime will be in Atlanta, Georgia on October 3– 5, 2006. For more information please go to <http://www.citizencorps.gov/news/press>.

Give us something to work with.

The Alabama Citizen Corps Council is looking for articles, pictures, updates, lessons learned, tips, useful websites and events for this monthly newsletter. Please send any information on Citizen Corps, CERT, Volunteers in Police Service, Neighborhood Watch, Medical Reserve Corps, Fire Corps, or anything else of interest to Citizen Corps Councils to: alison.welty@servealabama.gov. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month to be published in the following month's newsletter, space permitting.

August's Tip of the Month!

Back to School

As the summer winds down, parents and children alike start thinking about heading back to school. Remember these important tips to ensure a safe and happy school year!

- Know and understand your child's school emergency plan.
- Be sure your child knows what to do in the case of a disaster while they are in school.
- Encourage your children to check out Fema.gov/kids or Ready.gov for fun tips and exercises.
- Don't forget this includes college students who may be living away from home for the first time ever.



It's Never Too Early to Think Ahead...

National Preparedness Month (September) is almost here! It's never too early to start thinking about the kind of projects you would like to launch in your community to help everyone become more prepared for disasters of all kinds.

Send Us Your Feedback!

Have suggestions or ideas for topics? Please send them to Ruth Smith at Ruth.Smith@servealabama.gov